



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Fortifying Flour for a Stronger Ethiopia



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U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Vrooman holds a bag of ASTCO's fortified wheat flour.

In 2004, Ethiopian business owners and brothers, Saeed Salem Awad and Ali Salem Awad, installed a microfeeder in their wheat processing plant. The new equipment was intended to fortify wheat flour with essential vitamins and minerals. It also held the potential for reducing chronic undernutrition, one of the nation's most intractable health problems.

For children over 6 months old, flour fortification is a relatively inexpensive and highly effective way to reduce the high rate of child mortality and stunted growth in developing countries. In Ethiopia, for example, undernutrition is responsible for 45 percent of all child deaths. Two out of five children suffer from stunting.

But for close to a decade, the plans for flour fortification at ASTCO, the Awad brothers' business, had to wait. Production stalled due to a lack of expertise in installing and calibrating the equipment. In addition, the country lacked national standards for flour fortification.

A Global Development Alliance partnership with Feed the Future helped to break the logjam and get production rolling. It brought in the partnership's implementer, TechnoServe, to link volunteer technical and business experts from General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM and Buhler through Partners in Food Solutions (PFS) to support ASTCO and other millers and food processors. PFS is a nonprofit organization that connects technical and business experts from global food companies to small food processors in developing countries.

In 2014, the partnership, working with Ethiopian Ministry of Industry and other stakeholders, produced draft fortification standards recommending the minerals and vitamins to fortify edible oils and flours.

The early results have been encouraging. ASTCO has become one of the first companies in Ethiopia to locally produce and distribute fortified wheat flour with important minerals and vitamins, and two additional private companies have embarked on voluntary fortification at their own cost and continue to receive technical support from Feed the Future, TechnoServe and PFS. Additionally, the Government of Canada's Micronutrient Initiative, which provides affordable and innovative solutions to

end micronutrient deficiencies, has financed three local farmer cooperatives to buy dossifiers for wheat flour fortification with the help of TechnoServe and PFS with an aim of reaching at least 300,000 households. With the kick-off in local fortification, Feed the Future has set the ball rolling for more consistent food fortification in Ethiopia, which will ensure long-term benefits for human and economic development.

The longer-term results of flour fortification in Ethiopia and other developing countries are likely to pay off in the form of lower rates of child mortality, reduced burdens on health systems, improved educational performance and achievement, and increased future productivity.